

## HALL OF FAME INDUCTION – KING RANCH AUSTRALIA PTY LTD

We honour King Ranch Australia Pty Ltd with induction into the AQHA Hall of Fame. In the early 1950's Robert Kleberg Jnr began to consider the possibility of expanding the company's ranching operations beyond the territorial USA. He was prompted by not only the corporation objectives of deriving profit but also by the wish to establish the ability of the Santa Gertrudis breed to thrive in a variety of physical settings, and by social concern to do what he could to address the worldwide problem of protein shortages. Little inexpensive cattle was available in temperate climates, so he began to consider the possibilities of cattle breeding in tropical and subtropical climates. Subsequent investigation and negotiations led to ventures in Australia, Argentina, Venezuela, Morocco and Spain. The company's Australian operations were conducted on more than 7 million acres, almost all under lease. Incorporated in 1951, King Ranch Australia owned the freehold properties of Milton Park, Retford Park and Deloit in New South Wales. Milton Park and Retford Park (about 3,000 acres between them) were run as a single operation whose principal activities included a Santa Gertrudis stud, a Quarter Horse stud and an artificial insemination centre.

King Ranch Australia also owned ranching properties called Avon Downs, Elgin Downs, and New Twin Hills as well as a KRA subsidiary, Tully River Station, a 53,000 acre cattle fattening and breeding facility in North Queensland. Another King Ranch company also operated a Northern Territory station called Brunette Downs. The vast pastoral interests of King Ranch must certainly be recognized, however it was for their introduction of the Quarter Horse and their involvement in the growth and development of the breed in this country that they are now honoured as part of our own AQHA history.

In 1953 four stallions were selected to be sent to Australia, the first Quarter Horses ever to come here. They arrived in 1954. Two of the, Vaquero and Jackaroo, went to "Risdon" at Warwick. Gold Standard went to a property in Clermont, Queensland. These three were imported by King Ranch and the other was Mescal, imported by Sam Hordern and went to his property at Bowral. It was seven years before any more Quarter Horses arrived in Australia. This was a shipment of three stallions including Tejano Chico and Pronto Mio, along with eight mares all destined for the King Ranch breeding pastures. In 1963 came a shipment of fifteen. There were five stallions, one of these went to Isis Downs in Queensland, and the other four were for King Ranch properties, as were eight of the mares. Two were for S. B. Myer in Victoria.

King Ranch Australia owned the first Q registered (Vaquero Q1), the first registered Q mare (Maquina Q-5), the first registered Q gelding (Quarterman Q-72), the first R1 registered horse (Chester R-1) and the first registered R-2 horse, Colrando. It is now fitting that King Ranch Australia be the first corporation inducted into the AQHA Hall of Fame.

King Ranch Australia Principals were key to the development of the Australian Quarter Horse Association in 1964. Starting initially, and based at Milton Park, New South Wales, Peter Bailleau and employees of KRA started the AQHA. Martin Lemann wrote the first Constitution, and it was King Ranch Australia that drove it in its first few formative years. Peter Bailleau was the first President of the AQHA, and it was King Ranch Australia Directors and their families that were included on the first Board of Directors, including Sidney Bailleau Myer, Sarah Myer (formerly Hordern), and Martin Lemann (Assistant to the KRA General manager, Peter Bailleau), who was in charge Quarter Horse stud operations which was run by such great horsemen as Stan Shephard, and

assisted by Greg Gilpin. It was the performance and Halter horses bred and shown by King Ranch that set the early standards of showing and conformation in Australia, the goal for others to aim for.

The important nexus that KRA made between the Santa Gertrudis and the Quarter Horse saw many of our great early Quarter Horse breeders like George Greenup, and Barney and Raul Joyce have a connection through their owning both Santa Gertrudis and Quarter Horses. This saw Quarter Horses spread rapidly throughout Queensland and New South Wales. Quarter Horses were sold at every King ranch bull sale, held annually at Milton Park. They created the high profile of the Quarter horse that saw their popularity skyrocket.

King Ranch brought American trainer Ronny Kellum to Australia, he gave demonstrations of cutting and some of these bull sales. He was one of the first US trainers to come here, and ignited enthusiasm for Western events.